

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF PILL: \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW TO USE ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS:

Take one hormone pill at the same time each day. **To have a period monthly:** at the end of the hormone pills, take a spacer pill each day for 4 days. Repeat! **To have a period every 3 months:** skip the spacer pills for cycle 1 and 2; wait till the end of cycle 3 to take 4 spacer pills. Repeat! Use a second method of birth control (spermicide & condoms) during the first week on the pill. Repeat!

(Some packages of oral contraceptive pills contain 7 spacer pills. Before starting the cycle of pills, punch out the last 3 spacer pills and throw them away.)

REMEMBER: TAKE PILLS AT THE SAME TIME EACH DAY!!!!

- If you are bleeding in the middle of a pack, continue taking the pills. Do not go off the pill or start taking the spacer pills.
- Be sure to take all four spacer pills regardless of how long your period lasts.
- If you have taken all four spacer pills and are still bleeding, start the next package of pills anyway.

### MISSED PILLS...

- **IF YOU MISS ONE PILL:** take the pill as soon as you remember and then take your next pill at the regular time. Be sure you use another birth control method for the next 7 days.
- **IF YOU MISS TWO PILLS IN A ROW:** take two tablets as soon as you remember and two tablets the next day. Return to your regular schedule and make sure you use a back-up birth control method the next 7 days.
- **IF YOU MISS THREE PILLS IN A ROW:** Stop taking your pills, wait until you have a normal period, and begin a new pack just as you did the first time. Be sure to use another form of birth control (spermicide & condoms) from the time you stopped taking the pills until you are through the first 7 days of pills.

### MISSED PERIODS... (For those who are taking 4 spacer pills monthly)

- **IF YOU HAVE NOT MISSED ANY PILLS AND DO NOT HAVE A PERIOD:** you can safely start a new package of pills at the regularly scheduled time.
- **IF YOU MISS ONE OR MORE PILLS AND DO NOT HAVE A PERIOD:** take a home pregnancy test or call the clinic and schedule a pregnancy test appointment.
- **IF YOU DO NOT HAVE TWO PERIODS:** take a home pregnancy test or call the clinic and schedule a pregnancy test appointment; even if you have taken your pills every day.

(Continued on back)

## **SIDE EFFECTS...**

*Below are common side effects which may go away or decrease as your body adjusts to the pill. If you have used pills for a couple of months and continue to experience side effects, please call the clinic. Switching to a different type of pill will often eliminate or reduce symptoms.*

### **SYMPTOMS:**

### **THINGS TO TRY:**

*weight gain, fluid retention, breast fullness/ tenderness  
spotting or missed periods*

*cut back on salt and increase exercise  
make sure you are taking your pill at the same  
time every day.*

*nausea*

*take your pill with your evening meal  
or with breakfast*

*increased yeast infections*

*eat "live culture" yogurt daily*

*depression, anxiety, fatigue, moodiness*

*exercise and cut back on caffeine*

## **THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS ARE RARE, BUT THEY REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION**

- A** - ABDOMINAL PAIN (SEVERE)
- C** - CHEST PAIN (SEVERE), COUGH, SHORTNESS OF BREATH
- H** - HEADACHE (SEVERE), DIZZINESS, WEAKNESS OR NUMBNESS
- E** - EYE PROBLEMS (VISION LOSS OR BLURRING), SPEECH PROBLEMS
- S** - SEVERE LEG PAIN (CALF OR THIGH)

**IF ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS OCCUR, CALL ONE OF THESE EMERGENCY NUMBERS:**

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| FLATHEAD FAMILY PLANNING          | 751-8150 |
| NORTH VALLEY HOSPITAL             | 863-3500 |
| KALISPELL REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER | 752-5111 |

## **REMEMBER.....**

- ✓ *When seen by a doctor for other problems, be sure to mention that you are using the pill.*
- ✓ *Get a complete evaluation once a year.*
- ✓ *Call the clinic for pill supply appointments two weeks into your 3rd package of pills.*

**Emergency Contraception – Mistakes happen.** *Emergency contraception can reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy. EC works best when taken as soon as possible within 120 hours of unprotected intercourse. Contact Flathead Family Planning for more information (406)751-8150.*

